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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

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This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed November 1, 2007. Claims 1-9 and 11-19 were pending in the present application. This Amendment amends claims 1, 7, 8, and 13-16, and cancels claims 17-19 without prejudice, leaving pending in the application claims 1-9 and 11-16. Reconsideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested.

Warning of Duplicate Claims

The Examiner advises that "should claims 1, 7 and 13 be found allowable, claims 14-18 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof." (Office Action: pg. 3). In response, Applicants offer the following remarks.

Claims 17-19 have been canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, the warning with respect to these claims is believed to be moot.

Claims 14-16 recite various additional embodiments of the present invention. Applicants submit that claims 14-16 are substantially different in scope than claims 1, 7, 13. For example, claim 14 recites, *inter alia*, "a business-entity data-exchange computer program device" comprising "a computer program storage device." Further, claims 15 and 16 recite, *inter alia*, "establishing privilege access criteria," "receiving an object request by an individual user," and "verifying the individual user's privilege access criteria." Applicants submit that none of these features are positively recited in claims 1, 7, or 13. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 14-16 are not duplicative of claims 1, 7, and 13, and request that the warning be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection of Claims 1, 7, and 13-16

Claims 1, 7, and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

With respect to claims 1 and 7, the Examiner asserts that the claimed feature "said access criteria comprising criteria selected from the group consisting of trade secret criteria, confidentiality among business partners criteria, established business relationship criteria

confidential information criteria,. . . host status, guest status, original equipment manufacturer

status, contract equipment manufacturer status, and user ID" is not described in the Specification.

Applicants respectfully disagree. Examples of such access criteria are discussed, for instance, at

page 11, lines 4-23 of the Specification as filed. However, for reasons unrelated to patentability,

claims 1 and 7 have been amended to remove the above-recited feature. Accordingly, the

rejection of claims 1 and 7 in this regard is believed to be moot.

With respect to claims 13-16, the Examiner asserts that the claimed feature

"allowing controlled access to individual groups of data contained within said requested object

according to an individual user's predetermined privileges in response to said access criteria

associated with said groups of data contained within said redacted object" is not described in the

Specification. Applicants respectfully disagree. This specific feature is discussed, for example,

at page 8, lines 6-11 of the Specification as filed:

> The invention allows controlled access to these objects and their related
> attributes by guest users having certain privileges. Different levels of access may be established
> for a given user according to a host's predetermined criteria. An object could even be made
> invisible to a guest user. Furthermore, a host may allow a guest user to access and modify any of
> these objects or related attributes according to the specified privilege criteria set up by the host.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 13-16 in this regard is believed to be

overcome.

35 U.S.C. §102(e) Rejection of Claims 1-9 and 11-19

Claims 1-9 and 11-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated

by Gervais et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,579, hereinafter "Gervais"). Applicants respectfully

submit that Gervais does not disclose each and every feature of these claims.

Embodiments of the present invention are directed to techniques for sharing

information between business entities participating in a product supply chain. According to one

set of embodiments, an object and associated information are stored in a database, wherein the

object comprises distinguishable groups of data, and wherein each group of data has associated

access criteria for access to said group of data. For example, the object may correspond to a

particular product, and the distinguishable groups of data may include product specifications,

component pricing, and the like. Controlled access to the groups of data is then provided to one or more users. In various embodiments, the controlled access is based on access criteria and/or predetermined access privileges associated with a particular requesting user. Further, the predetermined access privileges may vary according to a status of a product-manufacturing business relationship between a business entity the requesting user is affiliated with, and a business entity that controls the object. For example, the business entity that controls the product object mentioned above may be an original equipment manufacturer (OEM), and the requesting user may work for a contracting equipment manufacturer (CEM) that supplies components to the OEM. Accordingly, the information that the requesting user may view and/or edit with respect to the product object may vary according to the product-manufacturing business relationship between the CEM and the OEM (*e.g.*, particular components that are being supplied, *etc.*). This allows the product object and associated information to be shared among a plurality of entities in the product supply chain while maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information.

In accordance with the above, Applicants' independent claim 1 (as amended) recites:

> A business-entity data-exchange system for providing the transfer of and the controlled access to a version of an object and other associated information of a file by a plurality of users from different business entities, said business entities being business partners or potential business partners producing products and component parts from different companies throughout a product supply chain comprising:
>
> a database for storing an object and associated information, the object comprising distinguishable groups of data, each group of data having associated access criteria for access to the groups of data,
>
> said data comprising multiple elements selected from the group consisting of product data, supply chain data, component part data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, design data, development data, access privilege data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business documents data, business agreements data, OEM products and components data, CEM products and components data, bill of material data, change order data, component part object data, component part linking data, component part identification data, component part number data, part attribute data, part affiliation data, part product context data, specifications drawing data, color data, size data, type data, price data, quantity data, find number data, cross- reference data, related information data, earlier version

data, history of change data, text document data, graphics drawing data, other attribute data, redacted data, discovery privilege data, cost data, component parts specifications data, product specifications data, quantity received data, quantity needed data, availability data, supplier type data, geographical information, and purchase order data;

an application server configured with memory and operation software code to control access to data stored in the database and to set up and send a document file having a representation of an object and associated documents that are stored in the database;

a memory for storing software for controlling the operation of said application server; and

access data application code stored in the memory and executable by the application server, said access data application code being responsive to said access criteria associated with said groups of data contained within a version of an object and to predetermined modification privileges for allowing controlled access to modify individual groups of data contained within the version of the object by an individual user.

wherein the version of the object that may be viewed or modified by said individual user, herein termed a requested object, is a redacted version where the data that is redacted varies according to said individual user's predetermined access or modification privileges;

and <u>wherein said predetermined access or modification privileges of said individual user vary according to a status of a product-manufacturing business relationship between a business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and a business entity that controls said data exchange system</u>.

(Applicants' claim 1, as amended, emphasis added).

Applicants submit that at least the above features are not disclosed by Gervais. For example, Gervais does not disclose a business-entity data-exchange system "wherein said predetermined access or modification privileges of said individual user vary according to a <u>status</u> of a <u>product-manufacturing business relationship</u> between a business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and a business entity that controls said data exchange system." (Emphasis added).

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Gervais teaches the above feature because "the predetermined read/write accesses vary according to the status of business partnership between the business entity that the user is affiliated with as in FIG. 6A and the

system administrator that controls the system (Gervais, Col. 8 Lines 60-65 and Col. 9 Lines 60-67)." (Office Action: pg. 8). Applicants respectfully disagree.

Gervais is directed to a business-to-business portal that organizes access to extended business applications. (Gervais: Abstract). As best understood, the sections of Gervais cited by the Examiner merely describe a generic security model for controlling access to entities (*i.e.*, resources) in the portal. For example, col. 8, lines 60-65 state that "privileged users such as System Administrators may create userids, manage person groups, alter system settings such as fonts. . ." Col. 9, lines 60-67 state that "each entity. . . has both a group of users and a group of managers. The user group has read access to the entity and the management group has read/write authority to the entity. The manager group is a subset of the user group as shown in FIG. 8A"

Thus, at best, the cited sections merely disclose the general concept of assigning different access privileges to different security access groups (*e.g.*, the user group or the manager group). Applicants submit that the cited sections <u>do not teach anything</u> about <u>varying the access privileges of an individual user</u> based upon a <u>status</u> of a <u>business relationship</u> between a business entity of the user, and a business entity that controls the system. Further, the cited sections do not teach anything about varying access privileges based on a status of a <u>product-manufacturing</u> business relationship. Accordingly, Gervais necessarily fails to disclose "wherein said predetermined access or modification privileges of said individual user vary according to a <u>status</u> of a <u>product-manufacturing business relationship</u> between a business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and a business entity that controls said data exchange system" as recited in amended claim 1. (Emphasis added).

For at least the foregoing reasons, Gervais does not anticipate or render obvious Applicants' claim 1. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Independent claims 7 and 13-16 recite features that are substantially similar to independent claim 1, and are thus believed to be allowable over Gervais for at least a similar rationale as discussed for claim 1, and others.

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Dependent claims 2-6, 8, 9, 11, and 12 depend from independent claims 1 and 7 respectively, and are thus believed to be allowable over Gervais for at least a similar rationale as discussed for claims 1 and 7, and others.

Independent claims 17-19 have been canceled without prejudice, and thus the rejection of claims 17-19 is believed to be moot.

Amendments to the Claims

Unless otherwise specified, amendments to the claims are made for purposes of clarity, and are not intended to alter the scope of the claims or limit any equivalents thereof. The amendments are supported by the specification and do not add new matter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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